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Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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The right to food

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/186 of 22 December 2003, as well as all Commission on Human Rights resolutions in this regard, in particular resolution 2004/19 of 16 April 2004,[1]

Recalling also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[2] which provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for her or his health and well-being, including food, the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition,[3] and the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[4]

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 3* (E/2004/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] Resolution 217 A (III).

[3] *Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5-16 November 1974* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. I.

[4] See resolution 55/2.

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Recalling further the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[5] in which the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized,

Bearing in mind the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action[6] and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, adopted in Rome on 13 June 2002,[7]

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Reaffirming that a peaceful, stable and enabling political, social and economic environment, at both the national and the international levels, is the essential foundation that will enable States to give adequate priority to food security and poverty eradication,

Reiterating, as in the Rome Declaration and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, that food should not be used as an instrument of political or economic pressure, and reaffirming in this regard the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, as well as the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food security,

Convinced that each State must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals in implementing the recommendations contained in the Rome Declaration and the World Food Summit Plan of Action and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security in a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies where coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential,

Recognizing that the problems of hunger and food insecurity have global dimensions and that they are likely to persist and even to increase dramatically in some regions unless urgent, determined and concerted action is taken, given the anticipated increase in the world's population and the stress on natural resources,

Expressing its concern about the adverse impact on the realization on the right to food caused by many humanitarian emergencies, including plagues and natural disasters,

Stressing the importance of reversing the continuing decline of official development assistance devoted to agriculture, both in real terms and as a share of total official development assistance,

1. *Reaffirms* that hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity and therefore requires the adoption of urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination;

2. *Also reaffirms* the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of

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[5] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[6] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit, 13-17 November 1996* (WFS 96/REP), part one, appendix.

[7] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit: five years later, 10-13 June 2002*, part one, appendix; see also A/57/499, annex.

everyone to be free from hunger, so as to be able to fully develop and maintain their physical and mental capacities;

3. *Considers* it intolerable that there are around 842 million undernourished people in the world, that every five seconds a child under the age of five dies from hunger-related diseases and that more than two billion people throughout the world suffer from "hidden hunger" or micronutrient malnutrition when, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the world produces more than enough food to feed its entire population;

4. *Expresses its concern* that women are disproportionately affected by hunger, food insecurity and poverty, in part as a result of gender inequality, that in many countries, girls are twice as likely as boys to die from malnutrition and preventable childhood diseases, and that it is estimated that almost twice as many women suffer from malnutrition as men;

5. *Encourages* all States to take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right to food, including steps to promote the conditions for everyone to be free from hunger and, as soon as possible, to enjoy fully the right to food, and to create and adopt national plans to combat hunger;

6. *Requests* all States and private actors, as well as international organizations within their respective mandates, to take fully into account the need to promote the effective realization of the right to food for all, including in the ongoing negotiations in different fields;

7. *Encourages* all States to take action to address discrimination against women, particularly where it contributes to the malnutrition of women and girls, including measures to ensure the realization of the right to food and ensuring that women have equal access to resources, including income, land and water, to enable them to feed themselves;

8. *Stresses* the need to make efforts to mobilize and optimize the allocation and utilization of technical and financial resources from all sources, including external debt relief for developing countries, and to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies;

9. *Welcomes* the meeting of world leaders for action against hunger and poverty, convened by the Presidents of Brazil, Chile, and France and the President of the Government of Spain, with the support of the Secretary-General, and the resulting New York Declaration, which has been supported by 110 countries to date, and recommends the continuation of efforts aimed at identifying additional sources of financing for the fight against hunger and poverty;

10. *Recognizes* that the promises made at the World Food Summit in 1996 to halve the number of persons who are undernourished are not being fulfilled, and invites once again all international financial and developmental institutions, as well as the relevant United Nations agencies and funds, to give priority to and provide the necessary funding to realize the aim of halving by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, as well as the right to food as set out in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security[6] and the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[4]

11. *Urges* States to give adequate priority in their development strategies and expenditures to the realization of the right to food;

12. *Takes note* of the interim report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food,[8] and commends the Special Rapporteur for his valuable work in the promotion of the right to food;

13. *Supports* the realization of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur as extended by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2003/25 of 22 April 2003;[9]

14. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Special Rapporteur for his effective contribution to the medium-term review of the implementation of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action through the submission to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of his recommendations on all aspects of the right to food, and his participation in and contribution to the proceedings of that event;

15. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur to continue mainstreaming a gender perspective in the activities relating to his mandate;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to provide all the necessary human and financial resources for the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;

17. *Welcomes* the work already done by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in promoting the right to adequate food, in particular its general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food (article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), in which the Committee affirmed, inter alia, that the right to adequate food is indivisibly linked to the inherent dignity of the human person and is indispensable for the fulfilment of other human rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights, and is also inseparable from social justice, requiring the adoption of appropriate economic, environmental and social policies, at both the national and the international levels, oriented to the eradication of poverty and the fulfilment of all human rights for all;[10]

18. *Takes note* of general comment No. 15 (2002) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to water (articles 11 and 12 of the Covenant), in which the Committee noted, inter alia, the importance of ensuring sustainable water resources for human consumption and agriculture in realization of the right to adequate food;[11]

19. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Intergovernmental Working Group, as mandated by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, of a set of voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, as well as the endorsement of the Committee on World Food Security of the voluntary guidelines as submitted and its decision to transmit them to the Council for final adoption, and in this regard encourages States members of the Council to adopt the voluntary guidelines;

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[8] See A/59/385.

[9] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 3* (E/2004/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[10] Ibid., *2000, Supplement No. 2* and corrigendum (E/2000/22 and Corr.1), annex V, para. 4.

[11] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 2* (E/2003/22), annex IV.

20. *Also welcomes* the continued cooperation of the High Commissioner, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Special Rapporteur, and encourages them to continue their cooperation in this regard;

21. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit a comprehensive report to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-first session and an interim report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

22. *Invites* Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, treaty bodies, civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector, to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in the fulfilment of his mandate, inter alia, through the submission of comments and suggestions on ways and means of realizing the right to food;

23. *Decides* to continue the consideration of this matter at its sixtieth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".